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Those 'Spies'

A patriotic meeting held here on Monday was told that 10,000 Russian spies are being paid by the State Department to come here through Manchuria and Hong Kong. Behind this wild-distortion lies an interesting story, the story of some of the world's oldest and most vehement anti-Communists who have at last ended almost half a century of exile.

When the Bolshevik revolution overwhelmed Russia, tens of thousands of opponents of the new regime fled their country to Western Europe, to the United States and the British Commonwealth, and tens of thousands more to China. The privations of the latter group became legendary: former Czarist officers pulled rickshaws, fine ladies became maids and worked in factories, and many died. But some survivors made good. Some were farmers, others teachers and business men, and many were able to leave China.

The settled life of those who stayed in China was threatened by communism when Mao Tze-tung took over, and once again they had to move. Assisted by the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration and by private agencies, groups of Russians have been flowing through Hong Kong on their way to freedom for several years. The Communists, anxious to rid China of foreigners, have not impeded their departure, though they have allowed the refugees to bring out no property and little money.

Some have gone to Europe and Israel, larger contingents to South America, especially to Brazil and Paraguay. Only 540 have come to this country, among them 224 "Old Believers," devout peasants who adhere

to a severe form of Orthodox Christianity and who felt their religion threatened by Communist rule. Some 1,700 more Russians are believed to be trapped in Sinkiang (Chinese Central Asia), and scattered groups here and there in China proper. The last known substantial body passed through Hong Kong in May on its way to freedom, and so their odyssey ends. It is hardly a contingent of 10,000 spies, but it is a significant footnote to history, all the same.